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Jolyon Palmer maintained
his Championship lead



Palmer keeps his cool to win in Monaco

Motor Racing

Dave Smith – Sports Editor

Jolyon Palmer overcame multiple safety cars and a red flag to control the Monaco GP2 Feature Race and secure his second win of the season. It was also his second win in Monaco and his fifth consecutive podium this year, extending his championship lead to 44 points.

Starting from pole position he was out dragged off the line by Mitch Evans on the run down to St Devote. An early safety car neutralised the race with Jolyon in second place after the Hilmer car of Facu Regalia stopped at Tabac on lap one.

The safety car pitted on lap four and Jolyon set about snatching the lead from Evans in front, who was running on the softer compound tyre. Evans stretched out a small but on lap nine but Jolyon closed rapidly to be running just 0.3 seconds behind. Jolyon made a bold move up the inside of Evans

at St Devote at the start of lap 11 and then proceeded to pull out a big lead of nearly four seconds before his advantage was wiped out by a red flag caused when two cars collided at the Fairmont Hairpin.

When the race resumed, Jolyon set about building a big lead, lapping with a blistering pace, at times 1.5 seconds quicker than the rest of the field with a string of fastest laps. Holding a lead of 9.3 seconds on lap 25, Jolyon's advantage was wiped out once more when the safety car was again deployed when Jolyon's immediate championship rival Julian Leal crashed at the Nouvelle chicane. Fortunately, such was Palmer's advantage over his nearest rivals, he was able to pit and emerge in second place behind Stoffel Vandoorne and ahead of the best placed driver who had already pitted.

Vandoorne pitted on lap 33 putting Jolyon back into the lead, and from that point on and despite battling well worn tyres he held the lead to claim an exceptional

victory by 0.4s.

Having won the race, claimed pole position and set fastest lap, Jolyon has claimed the maximum 31 points from the weekend so far, and now has a championship lead of 44 points over Felipe Nasr.

Speaking after the race, Jolyon enthused: "It was a tough race. Mitch [Evans] was starting on the option tyres and was very quick early on. I got my head down and luckily I managed to pass him just before the red flag which was really important for the race. After the red flag it was a case of putting in qualifying style laps, pulling out a big gap and then the safety car came out again! So someone wasn't making it easy for me today but I'm absolutely delighted.

"It'll be tough to make it six podiums from six races when I start eighth on the grid but it's been a perfect start to the season and everything has gone to plan so far. The race was difficult, we still managed to win it but anything can happen.